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THE DISTRICT LINE • By Bill Gold

We Sure Need Some Pure Feud Laws

POLITICIANS in both camps have been saying that this autumn's campaign is likely to be bitter, perhaps even dirty. I

hope that they turn out to be wrong. These quadrennial campaigns give the Nation its best opportunity for intelligent debate and mature reflection. It is a blow to the democratic process when blind partisanship puts reason to rout.

The first danger in a dirty campaign is that victory may go to the more intemperate candidate rather than to the one better qualified for office. The second danger is that there are always some minds in which campaign falsehoods take firm root.

The campaign ends, but the dirt remains and becomes a breeding ground for increased bitterness and partisanship.

In Sunday's editions of this newspaper, staff reporter Julius Duschka told about a speech made in California by Prof. Revilo P. Oliver



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of the University of Illinois. Prof. Oliver is a member of the council of the John Birch Society.

He told his audience that President Kennedy's assassination was engineered with the help of the Central Intelligence Agency, and that under orders from Secretary of Defense McNamara, the Army "began to rehearse for the funeral more than a week before the funeral." He indicated that our CIA was working hand-in-glove with Soviet secret police to murder President Kennedy.

Some 1300 people heard that speech, and many of them probably believe what they heard. The man said it and nobody refuted it, so it must be so. And, as a John Birch member wrote to me some time ago, "Can you prove that Oswald acted on his own and that the CIA was not involved?"

Ordinarily, if I were to announce that the moon is made of green cheese, it would be up to me to offer proof of the statement, rather than up to a doubter to disprove it.

But in politics, the burden of proof somehow gets turned around. If you can't disprove the charge it must be so.

Can you prove that the moon is not made of green

cheese? You can't? Then it must be so.

If I lie to you about a commercial product that I'm

selling, the Federal Trade Commission can stop me, and if I promise that my sugar pills will cure your aches and pains the Food and Drug people can come after me. But apparently there is no effective bar against wild statements made in the political arena, and that seems a pity.

Surely there's a more responsible way for a democratic people to discuss national issues.

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